



STATE OF IOWA

ISSUE 4

## REBUILD IOWA OFFICE (RIO) LEGISLATIVE WEEKLY

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[www.rio.iowa.gov/news/legislative\\_weekly/index.html](http://www.rio.iowa.gov/news/legislative_weekly/index.html)

### RIO MISSION:

The Rebuild Iowa Office will lead the State of Iowa's efforts to rebuild Iowa safer, stronger and smarter in the wake of the 2008 severe storms and catastrophic flooding.

### RIO VISION:

We envision a resilient Iowa that will be safe, sustainable and economically strong for its people, reaffirming its ties to the land, rivers, environment and rich cultural history.

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## MAJOR GENERAL RON DARDIS NAMED AS REBUILD IOWA OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Governor Culver announced last Thursday that Major General Ron Dardis, the retiring commander of the Iowa National Guard, will serve as Executive Director of the Rebuild Iowa Office effective February 9 (subject to senate confirmation as detailed in the Disaster Recovery Bill. A summary of HF 64 is included in this issue). As Executive Director, General Dardis will oversee all operational, administrative, executive and legislative functions of the Rebuild Iowa Office.

A member of the Iowa National Guard for more than 40 years, most



General Ron Dardis was named to oversee the activities of the Rebuild Iowa Office

recently serving as Adjutant General, General Dardis was appointed by the

Governor as Chairman of the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission following last summer's floods and storms.

"It has been my privilege to chair the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission, and I deeply realize the magnitude of this historic disaster and the importance of the Rebuild Iowa Office mission," said General Dardis. "I look forward to working closely with the Governor, Lt. Governor, and legislature as we work together to move Iowa forward in the rebuilding process, and make our state even stronger for the future."

## LOCATION OF THE REBUILD IOWA OFFICE

When the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) was created, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) leased space near the FEMA offices in Urbandale for effective coordination of recovery activities. After several months, the RIO sought a lower-cost location

closer to other agencies and elected officials. DAS identified a location vacated by the Department of Criminal Investigations in the Wallace State Office Building. The move to the new office allowed the RIO to more effectively coordinate statewide

recovery activities with state agencies and also offered a low-cost location, reducing rental costs by approximately \$6,600 per month. You are welcome to visit the RIO; regular office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (M-F).

## SECRETARY NAPOLITANO TO VISIT EASTERN IOWA

On Wednesday, the new Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, will travel to Iowa to view the effects of last year's natural disasters.

Governor Culver and Lt. Governor Judge will lead the Secretary to several of the hardest-hit areas in the state — Cedar Rapids and the Iowa City/Coralville area. During meetings with

local officials and first responders, they will discuss the progress that has been made and the needs that still exist throughout the flood-affected region.

## HF 64 SUMMARY

HF 64, appropriating \$56 million from the Iowa Economic Emergency fund for three programs (Jumpstart Housing, Community Disaster Grants, and Individual Unmet Needs) and authorizing the Rebuild Iowa Office, passed the House 98-0, and the Senate 49-0. The Governor signed the bill on 02/02/2009. The bill addresses several priority recommendations of the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC).

The bill appropriates \$24 million to the Iowa Finance Authority for Jumpstart Housing assistance to eligible residents with a family income equal to or less than 150% of area median income. Forgivable loans of up to \$24,999 are authorized, with first priority to eligible residents who have not previously received Jumpstart Housing funding; second priority to eligible residents who have received less than \$24,999 in Jumpstart Housing funding in the past; and third priority to eligible residents who have previously received \$24,999 but continue to have unmet needs for down payment assistance, emergency housing repair or rehabilitation, interim mortgage assistance, or energy efficiency assistance.

Also, \$10 million is appropriated to the Department of Human Services to provide individual disaster grants for unmet needs. The DHS will establish and administer an Iowa Unmet Needs Disaster Grant program to reimburse eligible participants with an income at or below 300% of the federal poverty level. Assistance is capped at \$2,500 for unreimbursed expenses limited to personal property, home repair, food assistance, mental health assistance, child care, and temporary housing that were incurred due to disaster occurring after 05/24/08 and before 08/14/08. The case management program established by the Rebuild Iowa Office will assist long-term disaster committees in determining eligibility and certification of unmet needs, and help to ensure that the grants are nonduplicative. A voucher system is authorized that ensures sufficient data collection to discourage and prevent fraud.

The bill appropriates \$22 million to the Department of Public Defense, HSEMD, for grants to the 85 presidentially-declared disaster counties and cities in those counties. Applications from cities and counties must be

submitted to HSEMD by 04/01/09 with information on the proposed use of the moneys. Eligible uses include nonprofit organization assistance; public purchase of land and accompanying structures; repair, replacement or upgrade of public infrastructure damaged by disaster; increased costs associated with revaluing property due to natural disaster; small business assistance and assistance for replacing or rehabilitating housing. HSEMD will be mailing the application forms this week to the eligible applicants.

The bill creates a Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) with a sunset of 06/30/2011. HSEMD is directed to provide administrative support for the RIO. The governor shall appoint an executive director for the office, subject to Senate confirmation. The bill establishes the duties and reporting requirements of the office and creates a coordinating council with members from various state agencies, local governments, and legislators. Coordinating council members will neither receive per diem payments nor mileage reimbursement. The executive director may request representation from other state agencies.



### FACTS:

**6,000,000—  
ESTIMATED  
NUMBER OF  
SANDBAGS  
DISTRIBUTED  
DURING THE  
DISASTER**

**300,000—  
ESTIMATED  
GALLONS OF  
WATER  
DISTRIBUTED  
DURING THE  
DISASTER**

